low-paid servants by the grant of scarcity allowances roughly equivalent to 10 per cent of their salaries, and they have also effected a revision and improvement in the salaries and prospects of the officials in a few departments, like the Anchal, the State Accounts and the gazetted branch of the Judicial Department. The immensity of the task of carrying out this reform in all the departments of the State, however, is such that it cannot be completed within a reasonable time except with the assistance of a special Committee appointed for the purpose. Government have, therefore, decided to appoint a select Committee of officials and non-officials to deal with this matter efficiently and expeditiously, and it is hoped that the Committee will enable the Government to remedy this crying evil in a satisfactory manner. In view of the prevailing belief of there being an excess of establishments in some departments of the State and of the desire of the Government to have the foundations of that belief subjected to a careful test, the above Committee will also be requested to examine the adequacy or otherwise of the staff employed in the several services, and heads of departments will be requested to place at the disposal of the Committee information that will enable it to arrive at satisfactory conclusions in this respect.

27. Recruitment.—In the matter of recruitment to the services, again, some radical changes seem called for. At present, recruitment to the several services is effected without any rule or plan. In the higher ranks of the service especially, haphazard recruitment is productive of great harm. Regard should also be had to the fact that, consequent on the breaking up of class privileges and distinctions and the rapid growth of social and political consciousness in the country, the demand for equality of opportunities in the public service as in other walks of life is becoming increasingly insistent and that demand should be satisfied to a reasonable extent. I would here inform you that the report of the Committee appointed to deal with the question of the entertainment of non-Hindus and non-caste Hindus in the higher ranks of the land revenue service has just been received and will be soon taken up for consideration. In view to the removal of the defects inseparable from the present system of recruitment, Government are seriously considering the question whether the recommendation of the Government of India Secretariat Procedure Committee to create a Central Selection Board should not be adopted in Travancore. There is a precedent for this course in the Soldiers' Committee which was constituted some time ago with a view to make organised effort to secure employment for demobilised men and the labours of which have been attended with a large amount of success. A central board can more easily establish closer relations with the several sources of recruitment than any head of a single department, and it is not unlikely that a more equitable representation of all communities in the services could be secured by means of a central board than by heads of departments acting independently of one another. A further possible advantage of the proposed scheme will be that salaries for similar work in the several departments can be made more or less uniform, and this will have the effect of removing a great deal of the heartburning from which the middle and lower ranks in the services naturally suffer at the present time.

28. Office Routine.—I have taken some pains to look into the methods of work pursued in public offices in this State, and I find that these methods are in several respects antiquated and wasteful of valuable time and labour. There are no automatic means, for instance, of gauging arrears of work or of expediting their disposal. Inspections of offices are neither sudden nor systematic, and the sorting and destruction of records are not methodically done. Concise manuals dealing with office procedure and routine are absent and there is much avoidable waste of stationery and print. The periodical collection and preservation of statistics are practically unknown and work is carried on in the chilling atmosphere of ignorance and uncertainty. These and other defects, it is needless to say, seriously handicap efficient administration and prompt disposal of work. Any reform in the direction of increasing the efficiency of the administration and of improving the tone of the services is not less important than that of expanding the resources of the country or of satisfying the growing political aspirations of the people. The appointment of an Efficiency Audit Officer of comparatively high status with a small staff for effecting improvements on the lines indicated above has been tried with conspicuous success in the

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State of Mysore, and Government have therefore decided to try a similar experiment in this country. The statistical information already collected in my office is being published in a compendious volume and arrangements have been made for the regular collection and publication of agricultural and other statistics.

CIVIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

29. Municipal Councils.—The year 1095 is marked by the passing of two important legislative measures, *viz.*, the Municipal Regulation and the Legislative Council Regulation, and I may be permitted to make the observation that, in spite of their defects, they cannot but be considered as landmarks in the history of civic and political legislation in this country. It is impossible to deny that the former of these enactments has enhanced the usefulness of municipal bodies, enlarged their powers and resources, and provided facilities for their constitution on a distinctly popular and representative basis. Government have not been slow to follow up this Regulation by taking steps to give practical effect to its liberal features. Soon after I assumed charge of my office, a conference of the Presidents of Municipal Councils was held under my presidency, and the conference was invited to lay down general lines of policy to be adopted in regard to the constitution and working of the Councils, and the manner in which they should amplify their resources and assume greater responsibilities. While the duty of the Councils to enhance their resources by resort more largely to local taxation and depend in a gradually diminishing measure on the doles of Government was emphasised, it was fully recognised that these popular institutions should be freed from official trammels in a constantly increasing measure. Government then announced their intention of generally accepting the decisions of the conference, and I think that I may fairly claim for the Government that they have kept their promise in the orders they have since issued regarding the constitution of the several Councils. It will be noticed that they have been systematically sanctioning the inclusion of the largest possible elective element in the constitution of the Councils, and have also been allowing almost every Council to elect its own President. In a few cases, they have not hesitated to go even beyond the recommendations of the Councils and to grant them constitutions more liberal than those proposed by themselves. It is needless to add that nothing will be more pleasing to the Government than the transference of the entire burden of Municipal administration to the new Councils, retaining only the power to conduct a strict audit or scrutiny into their affairs periodically, and it is hoped that the people living within municipal limits will realise to the full their responsibility to pay for services direct and indirect which they get through the labours of their civic fathers. From numerous protests and petitions with which they have been for some time flooded, Government gather with regret that the unwillingness of the people to share the financial burden has not diminished in proportion to the growth of their desire to share in the work of administration.

30. Local Boards.—It is under contemplation to widen the sphere of local self-government, by extending it to rural areas, and with this object the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil is engaged in drafting a Local Boards Bill. It is the intention of Government to create two sets of local bodies. One will be the Village Administrative Panchayat with specific sources of income and definite powers and responsibilities, such as the maintenance and control of local roads and ferries and the supervision of primary education and local sanitation. The other will be the District Council, representative in its constitution and mainly advisory in regard to its functions. It will be the recognised body for dealing with local needs and for advising District Officers in regard to agricultural, industrial, co-operative and other matters connected with the well-being of the locality served by it.

31. Legislative Council.—The Government have already indicated their intention of further liberalising the provisions of the Legislative Council Regulation, I of 1095, by making provision for a non-official majority, and by conferring the privileges of moving resolutions and asking supplementary questions. Government have also resolved to afford to the non-official members of the Council an opportunity to participate in the framing of the annual budget, and the latter have

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